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commentaries, secular banking laws, surveys and evaluations of Egyptian banking institutions and credit policies, copies of speeches delivered by various banking officials, technical studies regarding the practical aspects of the operations of Islamic banks, and theoretical treatises on Islamic economics and Islamic banking. In addition to sources dealing with Islamic banking in Egypt, I have some material on Islamic banks in other Middle Eastern countries.

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to have conducted this research on Islamic banking in Egypt. As it happened, the work went smoothly enough from the beginning that I did not need to ask for special assistance from the ARCE staff. However, in the numerous routine minor problems that arose over the three months that I spent in Cairo, the ARCE staff was unfailingly helpful. I would like to thank ARCE both for the fellowship and for the assistance and friendship that I encountered in the ARCE office in Cairo.

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EGYPT'S ROYAL ARCHIVES, 1922-1952

Students of Egypt's thirty-year experience of constitutional monarchy have shared little in the discovery and exploration of Egyptian archives. Partly responsible is that brand of politics which fuses even the distant past with the present and has kept most of this century's Egyptian state papers from public scrutiny. The study of Egyptian history from 1922 to 1952 is characterized by an enduring reliance upon published materials and the holdings of Great Britain's Public Records Office.

A recent departure from this restrictive records policy is the willingness of Egyptian authorities to open the royal archives of Kings Fu'ad and Faruq to visiting scholars. I can only venture a tentative account of this collection's origins. In 1922, following the transformation of Egypt from protectorate to independent state under a constitutional monarch, the newly-formed diwan al-malik established a new repository for documents. The first few files were devoted to King Fu'ad and the metamorphosis of 1922; by the eve of the July 1952 revolution, the collection had grown to incorporate perhaps as many as 8,000 dossiers.

With the overthrow of the monarchy, the royal archives were seized and put at the disposal of the Presidency of the Republic. It is telling that the republican regime chose to withhold the records of the discredited monarchy and avoid their transfer to the National Archives. Renamed Mahfuzat Ri'asat al-Jumhuriyya, the collection was long housed at Qasr al-Qubbah; only recently were the documents moved to their present quarters at Qasr 'Abdin (Qasr al-Jumhuriyya). I was told that a handful of Egyptian historians make use of the collection here, but I did not meet any, and the royal archives are not mentioned in accounts of Cairene research facilities. If the current chief archivist's memory is not to be faulted, I was the first non-Egyptian to seek and obtain a permit for research.

This rich and varied collection is unrivaled as a primary source for the events of three transitional decades. Not unlike the Yildiz archives of Abdulhamit II,¹ Egypt's royal collection in-

corporates a variety of materials intended to alert the wary ruler to changing tides. The affairs of the royal family enjoyed priority at the *dīwān*, reflected in the accumulation of much information on the political and economic fortunes of Egyptian royalty. But hardly less attention was paid to the activities of rivals: the major and minor political parties (the Wafd, Liberal Constitutionalists, Ikhwān, Miṣr al-Fatāt, the Communists and others). Official appointments and the repeated rise and fall of governments were appraised; domestic intelligence provided numerous files on personalities (*shakhsīyyāt*), both Egyptian and foreign, and on important families. Dossiers treated companies and trade unions; disorders, strikes, assassinations, trials and other singular episodes also warranted extensive investigation. al-Azhar and Islamic affairs at home and abroad drew the regular attention of the *dīwān*. Economic policy, finance, the development of transportation, industrial capacity, land ownership, and the Suez Canal were all the subjects of dossiers. So, too, were the mixed courts and minority communities (Coptic, Jewish and foreign), and provincial affairs were assessed in intelligence reports from the field. Here were filed the memoranda of the secret police (*al-būlīs al-makhsūs*) on a wide range of suspect political activities. In addition to the usual correspondence, reports and minutes, many files contain rare pamphlets, handbills and photographs. In sum, there are few aspects of domestic Egyptian affairs for which these archives do not represent an indispensable source.

The significance of the collection does not end here. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry throughout this period forwarded to the royal *dīwān* copies of most incoming and outgoing dispatches, and the archives shed light on every facet of Egyptian foreign policy. Relations with the European powers (particularly Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy) are the subject of several hundred files of diplomatic correspondence and secret reports. Treaty negotiations (especially with Great Britain) enjoy an obvious prominence. Also documented are Egypt's relations with Middle Eastern states and peoples, and the creation and early activities of the Arab League. I cite but two files as examples of this material:

File 1791: *Taqārīr al-sifāra al-miṣriyya fī London* (Memoranda of the Egyptian Embassy in London) subsumes at least 19 subfiles, some running into hundreds of pages.

File 1291: *al-mas'ala al-filastīniyya* (the Palestine question) includes some 23 subfiles for the years 1937-1952, mostly dispatches from Egypt's consul in Jerusalem and Egyptian representatives in Western and Arab capitals.

A serviceable if rudimentary card index--handwritten in Arabic, alphabetical by topic--provides the key to these materials. All files

are topical and many trace their subjects through several decades so that it is possible to follow protracted developments with relative ease. The beginnings of a system of cross-indexing can be discerned and a more comprehensive index is planned for the future. The director charged with supervision of this collection has authored one of the few Arabic works on the organization and management of archives, and *Mahfūzāt Ri'āsat al-Jumhūriyya* may be counted among Egypt's best organized archival collections.

The procedure for securing permission to use the royal archives was rather vexatious, as is the case with all major Egyptian collections. A personal letter was submitted to the *ra'īs dīwān ra'īs al-jumhūriyya*; the letter's text was drafted in consultation with the chief archivist, Mr. Abū'l-Futūḥ Ḥamid 'Awdah (office phone 911-189). It was my experience that one may see all related documents which predate the 1952 revolution, but if a research topic is rejected as unsuitable, the historian will not be permitted to consult any materials at all. To expand or alter one's research topic in midstream, one must submit a new application.*

Once admitted, the visiting historian will find a competent staff to assist in the selection and retrieval of files. One should not make excessive demands upon their time. The principal task of those employed here is the management of the Presidency's current records, and they serve the historian as a favor rather than as a duty. Nor are there any facilities for researchers, and not so much as a table is set aside for reading. Perhaps facilities will be improved once historians begin to make use of the collection in some numbers. Those who do will be well rewarded, for no other source speaks to us from this past era with a comparable authority or intimacy.

¹See S.J. Shaw, "The Yıldız Palace Archives of Abūdlhamit II," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, iii (1971), 211-37. Perhaps Egyptian authorities will permit the compilation of an equally informative article on the holdings at 'Abdin.

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*Subsequent to Martin Kramer's entry into and use of these archives, two ARCE fellows failed to gain admittance despite persistent attempts. We are therefore now under the impression that the Egyptian authorities do not wish to encourage their use by historians - Ed.